

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 131624Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9268
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 1683

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NI, US, OVIP (YOUNG, ANDREW J.)
SUBJECT: OBASANJO/YOUNG CONVERSATION ON ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA

1. PORTIONS BUT NOT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING TEXT HAVE BEEN SEEN
BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG. THIS MESSAGE SHOULD THUS BE TREATED AS
UNCLEARED MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION.

2. SUMMARY: GENERAL OBASANJO AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG TALKED FOR
NEARLY FOUR HOURS AT DODAN BARRACKS FEBRUARY 10 IN WIDE-
RANGING CONVERSATIONS THAT EMPHASIZED SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES
BUT INCLUDED BRIEF REVIEW OF OTHER WORLD PROBLEMS AS WELL AS
DISCUSSION OF US/NIGERIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. THIS TELEGRAM
DEALS WITH DISCUSSION OF ZIMBABWE. SEPTELS WILL REPORT ON
OTHER SUBJECTS. AT OBASANJO'S REQUEST, MEETING WAS LIMITED TO
FOUR PARTICIPANTS--OBASANJO, AMBASSADOR YOUNG, BRIGADIER GARBA,
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AND AMBASSADOR EASUM. YOUNG EXPLAINED US UNWILLINGNESS ABANDON
HOPE FOR RESUMED NEGOTIATIONS ON RHODESIAN PROBLEM. HE SAID US
WOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT BRITISH ROLE IN GETTING
TALKS GOING AGAIN. HE DOWNPLAYED POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR NEW SOVIET
CUBAN COMMITMENT TO ARMED STRUGGLE AND PROMISED CONTINUED
US PESSURES ON SMITH AND ON VORSTER TO NEGOTIATE. HE SAID US
COULD NOT LEND DIRECT SUPPORT TO A MILITARY EFFORT TO BRING SMITH

DOWN BUT COULD PROVIDE INCREASED ECONOMIC AID TO FRONTLINE STATES THE US MIGHT BE WILLING TO JOIN THE UK IN TALKS WITH SMITH AND VORSTER IF THE GROUNDWORK WOULD FIRST BE LAID BETWEEN THE FRONTLINE LEADERS AND A BROADER PATRIOTIC FRONT. OBASANJO AGREED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SHOULD INCLUDE ALL LIBERATION LEADERS. YOUNG DISCUSSED POSSIBLE CARROTS-STICKS APPROACH TO US POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA. OBASANJO SAID HE FORESAW URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY ON A RISING SCALE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND URGED US MAKE NO "DEALS" WITH VORSTER. AT CLOSE OF MEETING, OBASANJO SAID HE WAS SENDING GARBA ON FEBRUARY 14 TO THE FRONTLINE STATES FOR CONVERSATIONS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH NYERERE, KAUNDA AND POSSIBLY MACHEL. HE WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASED THAT GARBA WOULD BE ABLE TO DRAW ON YOUNG'S VIEWS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THESE PRESIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

3. YOUNG DESCRIBED HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM AS FOLLOWS. IN THE ABSENCE OF NEGOTIATIONS, ZIMBABWE MIGHT BECOME INDEPENDENT WITHIN 18 MONTHS SOLELY BY FORCE OF ARMS. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE AT THE COST OF EXTREME HARDSHIP ON RHODESIA'S NEIGHBORS. SMITH CANNOT WIN AN ARMED STRUGGLE, BUT HE IS IN A POSITION TO DO TREMENDOUS DAMAGE. HE IS ALREADY TRYING TO OBTAIN WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS, WHICH COULD IN TURN PROVOKE OFFICIAL SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT. WE DO NOT FORESEE A SIGNIFICANT SOVIET OR CUBAN ROLE OTHER THAN THE PROVISION OF ARMS AND SOME TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE. AFRICAN COUNTRIES WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE SOVIET OR CUBAN TROOPS. IN LATIN AMERICA THE SVIETS LIMITED THEIR INTERVENTION TO CUBA. THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN LATIN AMERICA ARE VERY CONSERVATIVE. THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE MAJOR INVESTMENTS OF

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PERSONNEL AND MONEY OTHER THAN IN CUBA, WHICH THEY FEEL IS ALL THEY CAN HANDLE. FURTHERMORE, THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS ARE LESS THAN FULLY SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THEIR INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. FOR THESE VARIOUS REASONS, WE DOUBT THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT CAN COUNT ON MUCH ADDITIONAL SUPPORTFPPIOM EITHER SOURCE.

4. AS FOR US POLICY, YOUNG SAID US WILL OF COURSE CONTINUE TO APPLY ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON ZIMBABWE. THE BYRD AMENDMENT WILL BE REPEALED. WE WILL ALSO MAINTAIN PRESSURES ON RHODESIA THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH CLEARLY SEES THAT THERE IS NO REPEAT NO DEAL POSSIBLE WITH THE US. WHEREAS KISSINGER NEVER TALKED ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL SITUATION, PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE HAVE DONE SO AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. THIS MEANS THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS THROWN ALL THE MORE INTO A LARGER POSITION, THUS RENDERING A SETTLEMENT BY NEGOTIATION ALL THE MORE IMPERATIVE IN RHODESIA. WE BELIEVE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS STRONGER DIPLOMATICALLY THAN MILITARILY, ESPECIALLY IF THE COMBINED SUPPORT OF FRONTLINE COUNTRIES AND EUROPEAN COUN-

TRIES CAN BE ENLISTED ON ITS BEHALF. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT TALKS
BE TAKEN UP AGAIN EVEN THOUGH THE FIGHTING MAY CONTINUE.

5. OBASANJO SAID HE HOPED ALL ZIMBABWE LIBERATION LEADERS
COULD BECOME PART OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. YOUNG SAID THE US
AGREED. OBASANJO SAID NIGERIA'S OBJECTIVE WAS SIMILARLY TO
BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS., WITHOUT THEM , THE ACRIMONY
AND HARDSHIP THAT CONTINUED AND ESCALATED VIOLENCE WOULD BRING TO
THE AREA WOULD MAKE IMPOSSIBLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULTI-
RACIAL SOCIETY THAT NIGERIA WISHED TO SEE IN ZIMBABWE. MASSIVE
DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES WOULD BE REQUIRED ALONG WITH THE CONTINUING
MILITARY EFFORT IN ORDER TO BRING THIS ABOUT.

6. OBASANJO SAID NEGOTIATIONS WITH SMITH WERE IMPOSSIBLE.
CALLAGHAN TOLD HIM THIS THREE YEARS AGO AND HE MUST STILL THINK
SO. THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS HAD TRIED TO CONVINCE KISSINGER
THAT SMITH'S OBSTINACY AND DEVIOUSNESS WERE SUCH THAT THE US
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INITIATIVE SHOULD FOCUS ON NAMIBIA FIRST. KISSINGER HAD PER-
SUADED THEM THAT THE US "WOULD TAKE CARE OF SMITH." EVENTS HAD PROVED
THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS RIGHT AND KISSINGER WRONG.

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9269

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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EXDIS

WHAT MADE MATTERS WORSE WAS THAT THE US SEEMED TO HAVE DONE NOTHING EVEN ON NAMIBIA. AS FOR SMITH, IT SEEMED INCREASINGLY CLEAR HE COULD BE REMOVED ONLY BY FORCE. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, OBASANJO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE US "COULD BE COUNTED UPON FOR LIMITED SUPPORT OF A MILITARY EFFORT TO BRING SMITH DOWN."

7. YOUNG SAID HE WAS OBLIGED TO REPLY IN THE NEGATIVE. THE US HAD A RIGHT WING THAT NAIVELY MAY SYMPATHIZE WITH SMITH. SMITH WAS TRYING TO APPEAL TO "THESE RACISTS" OVER THE HEAD OF THE US GOVERNMENT. BESIDES, EVERYTIME THE US HAD TRIED DURING THE PAST 20 YEARS TO INFLUENCE THE SELECTION OF THE LEADERS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, WE HAD THE WRONG RESULTS. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION CAME TO OFFICE ON A PLEDGE NOT TO INTERVENE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS. WHAT THE US COULD DO, HOWEVER, WAS TO TAKE NON-MILITARY STEPS TO STRENGTHEN THE FRONTLINE NATIONS THUS ENABLING THEM TO APPLY GREATER PRESSURES TO BRING SMITH DOWN. OBASANJO
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SAID HE WOULD WELCOME FURTHER INFORMATION ON US INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD.

8. YOUNG NOTED THAT ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT HAD TO BE RESOLVED WAS THAT NO FIRM CONSENSUS HAD DEVELOPED AMONG THE LIBERATION GROUPS OR BETWEEN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND BRITAIN. THUS SMITH HAD RECKONED THAT ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS WAIT IT OUT. THE PF HAD TO BE STRENGTHENED BUT THE SOURCE OF POWER TO MOVE THE PF TO UNITE WOULD HAVE TO BE AFRICAN POWER, NO US/UK POWER. THIS IS WHERE NIGERIA'S ROLE IS SO IMPORTANT. "NYERERE AND KAUNDA ARE SOUND PHILOSOPHERS TO WHOM WE LISTEN AND FROM WHOM WE LEARN BUT SOMEONE HAS TO KICK ASS."

9. OBASANJO REFERRED TO NIGERIA'S EFFORTS TO KEEP THE PF TOGETHER, INCLUDING HIS SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS IN PERSON AND BY TELEPHONE WITH NYERERE WHILE THE GENEVA MEETING WERE IN SESSION, PLUS THE EFFORTS OF NIGERIAN DIPLOMATS IN GENEVA. HE ASKED HOW AFRICAN NATIONS COULD GET SMITH TO ACCEPT THE BRITISH PLAN FOR RESUMED DISCUSSIONS. WHAT SORT OF SCENARIO DID YOUNG ENVISAGE?

8. YOUNG SAID THE UK SHOULD TALK AGAIN WITH THE PF AS NYERERE HAD SUGGESTED. AFRICAN COUNTRIES SHOULD WORK TO BRING UNION TO THE DISPUTING PF ELEMENTS. YOUNG THOUGHT THESE EFFORTS COULD BE FORMALIZED BY A MEETING IN DA ES SALAAM OR LUSAKA BETWEEN UK, PF AND AFRICAN LEADERS, WITH THE US AS A POSSIBLE OBSERVER. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE UK AND THE US COULD MEET

IN PRETORIA WITH VORSTER AND SMITH. THE BYRD AMENDMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN REPEALED BY THIS TIME. GIVEN THE FACT THAT SMITH IS NOW SO DESPERATE THAT HE IS CALLING INTO MILITARY SERVICE THE MIDDLE-AGED POPULATION, AND GIVEN THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FOR THE STATE OF RHODESIA'S INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY, THE US SHOULD BE ABLE TO PUT ENOUGH PRESSURE ON BOTH VORSTER AND SMITH TO GET THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS GOING AGAIN. NEW ATTENTION WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN TO SUCH QUESTIONS AS THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND, SINCE CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS OF THE BLACK MAJORITY

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WOULD HAVE TO BE MATCHED BY SIMILAR ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE WHITE SETTLERS. THE FUND WOULD HAVE TO BE BETTER DEFINED. IS ITS PURPOSE TO KEEP WHITES IN ZIMBABWE OR TO EASE THEM OUT? WHERE WOULD THE MONEY COME FROM? THESE AND OTHER SIMILAR QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT BEFORE GOING BACK TO GENEVA.

11. OBASANJO SAID THIS SOUNDED LIKE A REASONABLE SCENARIO BUT HE HAD SERIOUS RESERVATIONS REGARDING VORSTER'S ATTITUDE. YOUNG SAID WE WOULD HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY OF DEALING WITH VORSTER. OBASANJO SAID THAT IS JUST WHAT HE WAS AFRAID OF. VORSTER IS AN ENEMY, AND THERE IS GREAT LONG-RUN PERIL IN ANY DEAL YOU MAKE WITH HIM NOW ON ZIMBABWE OR NAMIBIA. YOUNG SAID WE WILL NOT REPEAT NOT COMPROMISE ON ZIMBABWE OR NAMIBIA BUT ONLY ON INTERNAL MATTERS WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. THE KIND OF STRATEGY HE HAD IN MIND, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS TO USE A COMBINATION OF CARROTS AND STICKS VIS-A-VIS THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY. OBASANJO SAID WHEN WOULD YOU START THIS? YOUNG SAID RIGHT AWAY. PRESSURES MIGHT BE APPLIED IN STAGES. ONE KIND OF ACTION THAT MIGHT BE ENVISAGED, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER TO TALK WITH US BANKS ABOUT POSSIBLE QUIET ECONOMIC PRESSURES. MEANWHILE OTHER THINGS SHOULD BE DONE TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, SUCH AS THE TRAINING OF BLACK LABOR TO TAKE ON MORE RESPONSIBLE JOBS. BRITAIN AND EUROPE COULD DO VERY LITTLE TO APPLY PRESSURE, GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN INVESTMENTS AND TRADE AND THE DAMAGE THAT ANY DISRUPTION WOULD CAUSE TO THEIR OWN ECONOMIES (EXCEPT FOR WEST GERMANY). YOUNG SAID US ECONOMIC LEVERAGE IS COMPROMISED BY LACK OF DEDICATION TO SUCH ACTION ON THE PART SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF US SOCIETY. HOWEVER, PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES COULD BE USEFUL. IN THIS CONNECTION, YOUNG THOUGHT THE MENTION IN OPEC OF A POSSIBLE OIL EMBARGO WOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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